

The Exploits of Elaine

A Detective Novel and a Motion Picture Drama

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

The Well-Known Novelist and the Creator of the "Craig Kennedy" Stories

Presented in Collaboration With the Pathe Players and the Eclectic Film Company

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SYNOPSIS.

The New York police are mystified by a series of murders and other crimes. The principal clue to the criminal is the warning letter which is sent the victims, signed with a "clutching hand." The latest victim of the mysterious assassin is Taylor Dodge, the insurance president. His daughter, Elaine, employs Craig Kennedy, the famous scientific detective, to try to unravel the mystery. What Kennedy accomplishes is told by his friend Jameson, a newspaper man. Enraged at the determined effort which Elaine and Craig Kennedy are making to put an end to his crimes, the Clutching Hand, as this strange criminal is known, resorts to all sorts of the most diabolical schemes to put them out of the way. Each chapter of the story tells of a new plot against their lives and of the way the great detective uses all his skill to save this pretty girl and himself from death.

TWELFTH EPISODE

THE BLOOD CRYSTALS.

"On your right is the residence of Miss Elaine Dodge, who is pursuing the famous master criminal known as the Clutching Hand."

The Barker had been grandiloquently pointing out the residences of noted New Yorkers as the big sight-seeing car lumbered along through the streets.

No one had paid any attention to the unobtrusive Chinaman who sat inconspicuously in the middle of the car. He was Mr. Wong Long Sin, but no one saw anything particularly mysterious about an Oriental visitor, more or less, viewing New York city.

Wong was of the mandarin type, with long, drooping mustache, well dressed in American clothes, and conforming to the new customs of an Occidentalized China.

Anyone, however, who had been watching Long Sin would have seen that he showed much interest whenever any of the wealthy residents of the city were mentioned. The name of Elaine Dodge seemed particularly to strike him. He listened with subtle interest to what the Barker said and looked keenly at the Dodge house.

The sight-seeing car had passed the house, when he rose slowly and motioned that he wanted to be let off. The car stopped, he alighted and slowly rambling away, evidently marveling greatly at the strange customs of these uncouth Westerners.

Elaine was going out when she met Perry Bennett almost on the steps of the house.

"I've brought you the watch," remarked Bennett. "Thought I'd like to give it to you myself."

He displayed the watch which he himself had bought a couple of days before for her birthday. He had called for it himself at the jeweler's, where it had now been regulated.

"Oh, thank you," exclaimed Elaine. "Won't you come in?"

They had scarcely greeted each other when Long Sin strolled along. Neither of them, however, had time to notice the quiet Chinaman who passed the house, looking at Elaine sharply out of the corner of his eye. They entered and Wong disappeared down the street.

"Isn't it a beauty?" cried Elaine, holding it out from her as they entered the library, and examining it with great appreciation. "And, oh, do you know, the strangest thing happened yesterday! Sometimes Mr. Kennedy acts too queerly for anything."

She related how Craig had burst in on her and Aunt Josephine and had almost torn the other watch off her wrist.

"Another watch?" repeated Bennett, amazed. "It must have been a mistake. Kennedy is crazy."

"I don't understand it, myself," murmured Elaine.

Long Sin was revolving some dark and devious plan beneath his impassive Oriental countenance. He was no ordinary personage. In fact, he was astute enough to have no record. He left that to his tools.

This remarkable criminal had established himself in a hired apartment down town.

Long Sin, now in rich Oriental costume, was reclining on a divan smoking a strange-looking pipe and playing with two pet white rats. Each white rat had a gold band around his leg, to which was connected a gold chain about a foot in length, and the chains ended in rings which were slipped over Wong's little fingers. Ordinarily he carried the pets up the capacious sleeve of each arm.

A little Chinese girl, also in native costume, entered and bowed deferentially.

"A Miss Mary Carson," she blipped in soft English.

"Let the lady enter," waved Long Sin, with a smile of subtle satisfaction. The girl bowed again and silently left the room, returning with a handsome, very well-dressed white woman.

It would be difficult to analyze just what the fascination was that Long Sin exercised over Mary Carson. But as the servant left the room, Mary bowed almost as deferentially as the little Chinese girl. Wong merely nodded in reply.

After a moment he slowly rose and took from a drawer a newspaper clipping. Without a word he handed it to

Mary. She looked at it with interest, as one woman always does at the picture of another pretty woman. It was a newspaper cut of Elaine, under which was:

"ELAINE DODGE, THE HEIR-ESS, WHOSE BATTLE WITH THE CLUTCHING HAND IS CREATING WORLD-WIDE INTEREST."

"Now," he began at last, breaking the silence, "I'll show you just what I want you to do."

He went over to the wall and took down a curious long Chinese knife from a scabbard which hung there conspicuously.

"See that?" he added, holding it up. Before she could say a word he had plunged the knife, apparently, into his own breast.

"Oh!" cried Mary, startled.

She expected to see him fall. But nothing happened. Wong laughed. It was an oriental trick knife, in which the blade slipped into the handle.

"Look at it," he added, handing it to her.

Long Sin took a bladder of water from a table near by and concealed it under his coat. "Now, you stab me," he directed.

Mary hesitated. But he repeated the command and she plunged the knife gingerly at him. It telescoped. He made her try it over, and she stabbed him more resolutely. The water from the bladder poured out.

"Good!" cried Long Sin, much pleased. "Now," he added, seating himself beside her, "I want you to lure Elaine here."

I had been amusing myself by rigging up a contrivance by which I could make it possible to see through, or, rather, over, a door.

Kennedy, who had been busy at the other end of the laboratory, happened to look over in my direction. "What's the big idea, Walter?" he asked.

It was, I admit, a rather cumbersome and clumsy affair.

"Well, you see, Craig," I explained, "you put the top mirror through the transom of a door and—"

Kennedy interrupted with a hearty burst of laughter. "But suppose the door has no transom?" he asked, pointing to his own door.

I scratched my head thoughtfully. I had assumed that the door would have a transom. A moment later Craig went to the cabinet and drew out a tube about as big around as a putty blower and as long.

"Now, here's what I call my detectoscope," he remarked. "None of your mirrors for me."

"I know," I said somewhat nettled, "but what can you see through that?"

Elaine Took Out the Package of Bills.

putty blower? A keyhole is just as good."

"Do you realize how little you can really see through a keyhole?" he replied confidently. "Try it over there."

I did, and, to tell the truth, I could see merely a little part of the hall. Then Kennedy inserted the detectoscope.

"Look through that," he directed.

I put my eye to the eye piece and gazed through the bulging lens of the other end. I could see almost the whole hall.

Elaine was playing with Rusty when Jennings brought in a card on which was engraved the name, "Miss Mary Carson," and underneath in pencil was written "Belgian Relief Committee."

"How interesting," commented Elaine, rising and accompanying Jennings into the drawing room. "I wonder what she wants?"

"Very pleased to greet you, Miss Carson," she greeted her visitor.

The two girls ran into the other

room. There Mary looked at the motionless body on the floor and recoiled, horrified.

Elaine noticed some spots on her hands, and, seeing that they were stained by the blood of Long Sin, wiped the spots off on her handkerchief, dropping it to the floor.

"Ugh!" exclaimed a guttural voice behind them.

It was the servant who had come in.

"You—kill him—with knife?" insinuated the Chinese.

Elaine was dumb. The servant did not wait for an answer, but hastily opened the hall door.

To Elaine it seemed that something must be done quickly. A moment and all the house would be in uproar.

Instead, he placed his finger on his lips. "Quick—no word," he said, leading the way to the hall door, "and—oh, you must not leave that—it will be a clue," he added, picking up the bloody handkerchief and pressing it into Elaine's hand.

They quickly ran out into the hall. "Go—quick!" he urged again, "and hide the handkerchief in the bag. Let no one see it!"

He shut the door. As they hurried away Elaine breathed a sigh of relief. They had reached the street. Afraid to run, they hurried as fast as they could until they turned the first corner.

They pressed each other's hands and parted.

Meanwhile in the front room Long Sin was on his feet again, brushing himself off and mopping up the blood.

"It worked very well, Sam," he said to the servant.

They were conversing eagerly and laughing and did not hear a noise in the back room.

A sinister figure had made its way by means of a fire escape to a rear

Elaine and Mary had gone downtown, talking animatedly—walking down the avenue toward Mrs. Rivington's apartment.

Meanwhile, Wong Sin, still in his Chinese costume, was explaining to another male servant just what he wished done, pointing out the dagger on the wall and placing the bladder under his jacket. A box of opium was on the table, and he was giving most explicit directions. It was into such a web that Elaine was being unwittingly led by Mary.

Entering the hallway of the apartment, Mary rang the bell.

The servant opened the door and Elaine and Mary entered. He closed the door and almost before they knew it was gone into the back room.

Elaine gazed about it in trepidation. But before she could say anything, Mary, with a great show of surprise, exclaimed, "Why, I must have made a mistake. This isn't Mrs. Rivington's apartment. How stupid of me."

They looked at each other a moment. Then each laughed nervously, as together they started to go out of the door. It was locked!

Quickly they ran to another door. It was locked also.

Just then the Chinaman entered and stood a moment gazing at them. They turned and Elaine recoiled from him. Wong bowed.

"Oh, sir," cried Mary, "we've made a mistake. Can't you tell us how to get out?"

"No speke Englis," he said, gliding out again from the room and closing the door.

Elaine and Mary looked about in despair.

"What shall we do?" asked Elaine.

Mary said nothing, but with a hasty glance discovered on the wall the knife which Wong had already told her about. She took it from its scabbard. As she did so the Chinaman returned with a tray on which were queer drinks and glasses.

At the sight of Mary with the knife he scowled blackly, laid down the tray, and took a few steps in her direction. She brandished the knife threateningly; then, as if her nerve failed her, faintly, letting the knife fall carefully on the floor so that it struck on the handle, and not on the blade.

Wong quickly caught her as she fainted and carrying her out of the room, banged shut the door. Elaine followed in a moment, loyally to protect her supposed friend, but found that the door had a snap lock on the other side.

She looked about wildly, and in a moment Wong reappeared. As he advanced slowly and insinuatingly, she drew back, pleading. But her words fell on seemingly deaf ears.

She had picked up the knife which Mary had dropped, and when at last Wong maneuvered to get her cornered and was about to seize her, she nerved herself up and stabbed at him resolutely.

Wong staggered back—and fell.

As he did so, he pressed the bladder which he had already placed under his coat. A dark red fluid, like blood, oozed out all over him and ran in a pool on the floor.

Elaine, too horror-stricken at what had happened even to scream, dropped the knife and bent over him. He did not move. She rose quickly and ran through the now open door. As she did so, Wong seemed suddenly to come to life. He raised himself and looked after her, then with a subtle smile sank back into his former assumed posture on the floor.

When Elaine reached the other room she found Mary there with the Chinese servant who was giving her a glass of water. At the sight of her, the servant paused, then withdrew into another room farther back. Mary, now apparently recovering from her faintness, smiled wanly at Elaine.

"It's all right," she murmured. "He is a Chinese prince who thought we were callers."

At the reassuring nod of Mary toward the front room, Elaine was overcome.

"I—I killed him!" she managed to gasp.

"What?" cried Mary, starting up and trembling violently. "You killed him—"

"Yes," sobbed Elaine. "He came at me—he had the knife—I struck at him—"

The two girls ran into the other

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Across the hall, although we did not know it at the time, in room 549, already Wong Sin had taken up his station, just to be handy. There he had been with his servant, playing with his two trained white rats.

Wong placed them up his capacious sleeves and carefully opened the door to look out. Unfortunately he was just in time to see the door of 509 open and disclose us.

We hurried into 511 and shut the door.